

How Will Wife Interpret It?

By LESTER SCHICTER and HARRY ALTSHEN

You think YOU have trouble explaining to the wife if you're a couple hours late for dinner?

Take it from Vladimir Polichuk, boys, nichevo voprosu. You might formally translate that from the Russian, you know, "nothin'."

Polichuk, 30, a translator for the United Nations Secretariat, was missing for some hours Tuesday night and yesterday morning—and had to explain to Mrs. Polichuk, a battery of New York police, and the entire Soviet delegation to the UN besides.

AS SUCH EXPLANATIONS go, it was a pretty good one—he was out in the country and the car broke down. As for the fact that he owns no car and couldn't drive one if he did . . . well . . . that's just part of the eternal Russian enigma, no doubt.

Or take your choice of theories:

Was it a CIA cloak-and-dagger deal, as the Red officials nervousness seemed to hint?

Or one of those alluring, demsels supposed to be hanging around the UN delegates lounge all the time, looking for company?

Or just a long, long double feature at the movies?

It all started when Polichuk's wife, Irina, 23, with whom he came here from Russia four months ago, waited and waited and waited for him in their apartment at 132-25 Maple Ave., Flushing, Queens, Tuesday evening. He was supposed to be home for dinner at 8 p.m. At 11:30 p.m., she phoned the Soviet UN headquarters, 136 E. 67th St., where she works as a part-time typist, and asked if anybody had seen her Vladimir.

Nobody had. The delegation sent a car to Flushing, brought her back to headquarters, and questioned her until 3 a.m. At 4:30 a.m., an official crossed the street to the E. 67th St. police station and entered a missing person report.

Detective John Justy crossed the street and asked to see Mrs. Polichuk, to get the report first-hand. After a verbal hassle lasting 45 minutes, she was brought into a room with Third Undersecretary Alexi Vlassov who monitored her answers to the detective's questions. She told the detective she lunched with Vladimir at the delegation headquarters and he'd told her he wasn't going back to work Tuesday afternoon, but would do some shopping and head homeward because he didn't feel well.

AROUND 6 A.M. a newspaper reporter rang the bell of the Polichuk apartment and who should answer the door but Vladimir.

"Don't you know you're missing?" asked the reporter.

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Soviet interpreter Vladimir Polichuk is questioned by Det. LeRoy Sawyer in Flushing.

"Don't you know you're missing?" asked the reporter.

"Khto, ya?" said Vladimir, meaning, "Who, me?"

He'd gone to a movie, said Vladimir — Fellini's "8½" — and didn't get home till 2:30 a.m., that was all.

At 7 a.m. another Soviet under-secretary — the place is full of them — crossed E. 67th St. to the police station and told detectives, "It's all right. Polichuk phoned 10 minutes ago. He was in the country with friends and had auto trouble."

At 8 a.m. Vlassov and a carful of other Russians including a dark, good-looking femme fatale type (and just when the story needed one, too!) pulled up at

Polichuk's apartment house, popped him into the car, and drove him to the U.N., where he took refuge on the 14th floor and went back to translating documents.

After doublechecking his identification as he entered the U.N. building, detectives closed the case.